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## Combat Vehicle Crewman Uniform Safety In Armor Vehicles Prevents Burns

As the U.S. Army Armor Center's command sergeant major, it is great to visit units across the globe, watch them train, and share my own firsthand training experiences. I recently had the honor of visiting with the 3d Infantry Division at Fort Stewart, Georgia. I would like to thank the soldiers and the command of the 3ID for their gracious hospitality. Command Sergeant Major Kellman, your Armor/Cavalry troopers are magnificent. Also, I extend a warm thanks to Command Sergeant Major Barnello and First Sergeant Stephenson: your gunnery program is right on. Rock of the Marne!

On a trip to Alaska, I had the privilege of meeting the troopers of our newest unit, the 4th Squadron, 14th Cavalry Regiment (Reconnaissance, Surveillance, Target, and Acquisition), 172d Infantry Brigade at Fort Wainwright, Alaska. It was a pleasure to see such dedication in such a young outfit. Command Sergeant Major Dunham, I extend my admiration to your first sergeants for a job extremely well done.

Around this time each year, we address the safety issue of combat vehicle crewmen (CVC) wearing underwear made with synthetic fibers, like polypropylene or polyester, under NOMEX CVC uniforms. The good folks at Assistant TRADOC System Manager-Soldier, here at Fort Knox, have provided

vital information to address this very concern — mixing the NOMEX CVC uniform with synthetic underwear is an invitation for pain!

Armor soldiers in the field need to be made aware that a safety hazard exists if this type of synthetic underwear is worn under their NOMEX CVC uniform in the event of a fire. This includes the new moisture wicking tee shirt the Army is in the process of fielding. Nylon and synthetics, such as polyester and polypropylene, melt at about 480-degrees and 300-degrees Fahrenheit, respectively. Heat transfer through the NOMEX (which is resistant to temperatures up to 700-degrees Fahrenheit) could be high enough to melt these synthetic undergarments. I'll use a quote that Chief Warrant Officer Boyd Tacket III made in Flight FAX regarding an experience he had when his aircraft caught fire: "My chest, back, and buttocks were spared from any burns at all due to the cotton underwear that I had on. The burn literally went to where the underwear was and stopped. If I hadn't been wearing my NOMEX protective equipment and wearing it properly, there is no doubt in my mind that I would very probably have either died in the fire or died as a result of the burns I would have received." For your protection, wear underwear made of 50-percent cotton/50-percent wool or 100-percent cotton.

These natural fibers won't melt under the heat and will provide protection that will keep the heat away from your body in a flash fire.

Lastly, keep your NOMEX CVC uniform clean. Oil, grease, or household starch will cause the NOMEX fabric to burn. Dry cleaning or laundering to remove these contaminants will restore the NOMEX's fire retardant state. Don't be the soldier who survives a vehicle fire only to find yourself with melted polypropylene stuck to your skin. Worn properly, the CVC uniform will protect you from burns, should the unexpected happen in your combat vehicle. So make sure you are wearing underwear made of 50-percent cotton/50-percent wool or 100-percent cotton under your NOMEX CVC uniform. If you have any additional questions on this subject or other CVC clothing and individual equipment, please contact the Assistant TRADOC System Manager-Soldier at Fort Knox, Lieutenant Colonel Craig Carson, DSN 464-3519, or Mr. Larry T. Hasty, DSN 464-3662, commercial (502) 624-3519/3662, or e-mail [craig.carson@knox.army.mil](mailto:craig.carson@knox.army.mil) and [larry.hasty@knox.army.mil](mailto:larry.hasty@knox.army.mil).

Thanks to Mr. Hasty for his dedication to our Armor troopers; and thanks to all our troopers and leaders.

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